MARVEL

7

LGY#657

DUGGAN
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THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN

60 YEARS

KAELNGUI
—oneway—

OUTSIDE AMARILLO, TEXAS.

SO...WHAT DO YOU THINK, RHODEY?

I THINK... I THINK WE'RE PROBABLY GONNA WIND UP DEAD OR IN JAIL.

OR DEAD *IN* JAIL.

WE CAN MULTITASK.

YEAH...

...JUST WANT TO LAY OUT THE STAKES. FOR A ***SENTINEL*** FACTORY, THERE'S NOT MUCH SECURITY.

STARK UNLIMITED

STARK UNLIMITED

ARE THEY OVERCONFIDENT, OR ARE THEY *HOPING* YOU'LL TAKE A RUN AT IT, TONY?

TO BE HONEST, IT DOESN'T MATTER.

I'D RATHER ***DIE*** THAN LET THOSE SENTINELS COME ONLINE WITH MY NAME ON THEM.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO--

I DO. SOMEBODY'S GOTTA HAVE YOUR BACK.

...

OKAY, THEN. GIVE ME A HEAD START, THEN YOU COME IN GUNS BLAZING.

WHEN MULTIBILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST TONY STARK, INVENTOR EXTRAORDINAIRE, DONS HIS SOLAR-CHARGED, STEEL-MESH ARMOR, HE BECOMES A HIGH-TECH WARRIOR–THE WORLD'S GREATEST HUMAN FIGHTING MACHINE!

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS...

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN

"FIGHT THE FUTURE"

PREVIOUSLY...

Tony Stark used to have it all. But after spending his entire fortune to take black-market weapons off the streets, all Stark is left with is his Iron Man armor.

That's left his company, Stark Unlimited, vulnerable to a hostile takeover by the industrialist Feilong, who is using the acquisition to produce mutant-hunting Sentinels with Iron Man technology! Tony refuses to let these Stark Sentinels go into production. So he's left with only one choice: destroying his own company!

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WHAT'S WRONG?

AW CRAP.

IRON MAN, ⇢COFF⇠ SIR--YOU AIN'T SUPPOSED TO BE HERE.

THAT'S MY LINE.

I'LL CALL IT IN.

WE HAVE ORDERS TO--

SHKCHAKK

DUNNO IF YOU HEARD, BUT THERE WAS A RECENT CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT.

YOU MIGHT EVEN CONSIDER ME A DISGRUNTLED EX-EMPLOYEE.

AS YOU MAY KNOW, WORKPLACE VIOLENCE IS AN INCREASING PROBLEM IN THIS COUNTRY.

UNLESS YOU WANT TO RISK BEING A STATISTIC--

--I'D GET YOUR ASSES HOME!

FOOM!

STARK UNLIMITED

SKRABOOM

EVERYBODY CLOCK OUT EARLY TONIGHT...

...AND COME IN LATE TOMORROW.

O-OKAY, IRON MAN.

YOU HEARD THE MAN. EVERYBODY OUT!

The plan was simple: Iron Man kicks the door off the hinges and is seen sabotaging the production of the Stark Sentinels.

Sensors confirmed that all civilians had cleared out, so it was safe to deploy…

…my little surprise. The goal was to make the most expensive crater in Texas.

The ulterior motive for Iron Man was to see how far along production was.

The answer was: *too far* along.

WHOA!

BOOM

Rhodey's one of the only people I can trust with knowledge of my weapons cache. If you're a careful reader, you might remember that it's the reason I'm broke.

By the time I publish my autobiography, I'll have figured out how to make it old business.

KLIK!

On this night, some of the more powerful explosives and ordnance came in real handy.

KABOOM!

ALL RIGHT, PARTNER. THE HORNETS' NEST IS GOOD AND PISSED-- GOOD LUCK.

If you asked ten different people who Tony Stark is, you'd get a dozen answers. Inventor, Avenger, alcoholic, capitalist pig, hero, villain… you get the idea.

The truth is, I've probably been all of those things. And through it all, Rhodey's remained my best and most loyal friend.

That's why he's the only one I can trust to be Iron Man when I cannot.

GOOD JOB, RHODEY. I'M IN.

NOW SEND THE MARK 70 HOME AND GET CLEAR. I DON'T WANT YOU OR WAR MACHINE TO BE SEEN HERE.

With the Sentinels looking the other way, it allowed me a little room to sneak around in my new stealth armor--the **MARK NIL.**

No sense giving this armor an official designation, especially since I'm going to probably break every law in the books to get out of this jam.

COPY THAT, BUDDY.

I'LL ADMIT...

...FEELS LIKE HOME BEING BACK IN THE RED AND GOLD AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

GOING FROM THE WAR MACHINE TO THIS--

--IT'S LIKE TRADING A TANK FOR A PORSCHE.

YOU KNOW, I THINK I *DID* TRADE A TANK FOR A PORSCHE ONE TIME IN MUNICH BACK IN MY ARMS-DEALING DAYS...

...IT WAS A VINTAGE PORSCHE 550A SPYDER.

UH-HUH. DO YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU TOTALED IT?

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I TOTALED IT?

GIMME A BREAK, MAN--YOU WRECK EVERYTHING AT LEAST ONCE.

The stealth suit's wall-crawler capability works like a charm. Eat your heart out, Spidey.

IN FACT, I DID WRAP IT AROUND A TREE.

OF COURSE YOU DID.

HOW'S THIS BOMB GOING TO WORK?

IT'S NOT A CONVENTIONAL EXPLOSIVE. WORKING IN TANDEM WITH EACH OTHER, THEY CREATE A SPHERE--AND THEN IT IMPLODES.

IT'S KIND OF **THEORETICAL**. IT'S ALL I'VE BEEN WORKING ON SINCE I LEARNED ABOUT THESE ABOMINATIONS.

LET'S SEE EXACTLY WHAT THIS IS CODED FOR--NEED EVIDENCE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD STOP CHEERING FOR THESE DAMN THINGS.

CHIKK

I CAN'T ACCESS ITS CAPABILITIES OR SOFTWARE, BUT THE TARGET IS ***JOHNNY STORM.***

GOOD LORD... THE ABSOLUTE MAD MAN.

FEILONG ISN'T TARGETING JUST MUTANTS... HE'S TARGETING US ALL.

STEP ON IT, TONY!

IT'S GETTING HECTIC, AND--

BDOOM!

SKRASHK!

AARGH!

OKAY-- LAST DEVICE.

I'M EXFILLING NOW.

AARGH!

I shouldn't have activated the boot jets, but I was worried about the beating Rhodey was taking outside.

I NEED TO CALL AN AUDIBLE, I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO SWITCH ARMORS.

KA-BOOM!

AND I'M FEELING A LITTLE UNDERDRESSED WITHOUT THE FIREPOWER OF MY SUIT.

RHODEY-- THIS STEALTH SUIT--UGHN-- WASN'T BUILT FOR THIS.

JUST-- GET CLEAR!

DEET!

I was told later that the explosion could be seen from orbit. That never gets old.

It's the simple joys in life, right? Blowing stuff up.

C'MON! GO! GO! GO!

BOOM!

TONY! YOU CLEAR? YOU GOOD?

KER CHONG!

OW. KIND OF. JUST NEEDED A HAND.

COPY THAT. I'M DOING MY QUICK CHANGE AND SENDING THE MARK 70 HOME. TAKE OVER, B.O.S.S.

COMPLYING.

OUTBOUND.

KRAKOOM!

AAARGH!

UGHN...

YOU ARE UNDER ARREST. SURRENDER. OR FACE LETHAL PROTOCOLS.

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, BEING ARRESTED SOUNDS NICE.

C'MON! DAMMIT!

SKRUNCH!

RHODEY, TELL ME YOU'RE AIRBORNE.

RHODEY?

OH NO.

Rhodey was surrounded by Sentinels and Orchis shock troops flying in.

I could only look on helplessly from the shadows in a suit of armor that they couldn't detect as my best friend was arrested…

…for something I put him up to.

I did mention the urge to drink never goes away, right?

GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE...

A FEW HOURS LATER.

HOW BAD DID STARK'S FRIEND JUST #$%& US, FEILONG?

I'VE GOT THE SECRET FACTORIES PUMPING SENTINELS OUT, BUT I WON'T LIE, DR. STASIS...

...WE WON'T HAVE ENOUGH OF THE MACHINES ON THE NIGHT OF THEIR STUPID PARTY TO GET RID OF ALL OF OUR TARGETS AS WE HOPED.

BE AT EASE! YOU HAVE NIMROD!

YES, WE DO.

IT WILL ALL WORK OUT. WE'LL HAVE ENOUGH FOR WHAT MUST BE DONE THAT NIGHT, AND THEN WE'LL WIN *INCREMENTALLY.*

BY THE TIME THE AVENGERS AND ALL THE OTHERS REALIZE THEY'RE ON THE MENU TOO...IT WILL BE TOO LATE.

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, SIR?

I DID. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PUNCTUALITY.

WHICH ONE OF YOU WANTS TO DO THE HONORS?

D-DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?

TSK.

I'M SO GLAD YOU FINALLY HAVE THE NEMESIS YOU'VE BEEN LONGING FOR, FEILONG. BUT FRANKLY, I'D PREFER YOU DIDN'T, AND WE HAD ALL THE KILLER ROBOTS WE WERE PROMISED.

HE'S YOURS, NIMROD.

I APPRECIATE THAT. YOU CAN TAKE THE NEXT ONE IF YOU WANT.

SPLORCH!

I hid the MARK NIL away. I knew my life was going to be turned upside down again, but my only thought was getting Rhodey out of jail.

C'MON, C'MON... PICK UP, JEN.

TONY, THIS IS NOT A GOOD TIME.

JENNIFER! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CALL YOU. DID YOU GET TO--?

TONY! STOP TALKING.

I WAS ON A PLANE TO TEXAS. RHODEY WAS ARRESTED, AND WHY DO I FEEL LIKE THIS IS NOT NEWS TO YOU?

WE'RE GONNA NEED TO BAIL HIM OUT, AND DON'T WORRY, I'LL MAKE THIS RIGHT. BUT--*UH*, WAIT--I *PAID* YOU, RIGHT? WE STILL HAVE ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE.

TONY, THE JUDGE ALREADY *REFUSED* TO CONSIDER BAIL...

...THEY FOUND A *BODY* IN THE WRECKAGE OF THE FACTORY.

WHAT?

RHODEY'S GOING TO BE ARRAIGNED FOR MURDER. I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I CAN SEE HIM BEFORE THE NEXT HEARING...

TONY, ARE YOU THERE? TONY? IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, I GOTTA GO.

Before I can think, the urge to self-destruct kicks in.

WHAKK!

I punch and I punch again and again until I can't feel my hands.

WHAKK!

I forget whether it was a former therapist or a former bartender who observed that I'd built an armor for my friend...to protect him from me.

Now Rhodey was out of that armor and stuck in a hell I made for him.

I was nauseous. Light-headed. Angry. I needed a drink... because Feilong was going to kill my friend...and I couldn't stop him.

OH GOD.

NEXT: THE FLAMES OF HELLFIRE RISE

#8: HELLFIRE GALA TIE-IN!

AS THE X-MEN THROW THEIR LATEST HELLFIRE GALA, IRON MAN HAS TO CONTEND WITH THE NEW STARK SENTINELS FLYING THROUGH NEW YORK! CAN TONY STOP THESE MUTANT-HUNTING MACHINES ALONE? GUEST-STARRING EMMA FROST!

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